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Donate-a-Pension Initiative

- Recently, a 'Pension Donation Initiative' / 'Donate-a-Pension' initiative has been launched by the Ministry of Labor.

Key points of the program:

- This program has been started under the 'Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan' (Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan: PM-SYM) to make people contribute to the 'Pension Fund' of their supporting employees.
- Under this the citizens of India can contribute prominently for their immediate support staff like domestic workers drivers, helpers, caregivers, nurses in their home or establishment.

About 'Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana':

- 'Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana' (PM-SYM) is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme on a 50:50 ratio basis, in which the beneficiary makes a prescribed age-specific contribution and the central government corresponding amount to the beneficiary's account.
- **Implementation:** The scheme will be monitored and supervised by 'Ministry of Labor & Employment' and will be implemented by Life Insurance Corporation of India and 'Jan Seva Kendra e-Governance Services India Limited' (CSC eGovernance Services India Limited – CSC SPV).
- **Eligibility:** Under this scheme, workers in the age group of 18-40 years working in the unorganized sector can register themselves and deposit a minimum of Rs.660 to Rs.2400 every year depending on their age.

- The beneficiary person is not covered under the benefits of 'New Pension Scheme' (NPS), Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) and Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) and should not be an income tax payer.
- **Benefits:** Minimum assured pension of Rs.3,000 per month will be provided to the beneficiary after attaining the age of 60 years.

Beneficiary:

- Unorganized workers, home workers, street vendors, mid-day meal workers, head loaders, brick kiln workers, tanners, rag pickers, domestic workers, washer men, rickshaw pullers, Landless labourers, agricultural labourers, construction workers, beedi workers, handloom workers, leather workers, audio-video workers and other workers in similar occupations whose monthly income is Rs 15,000 or less.

National waterways

- Recently, for the first time through National Waterways, food grains were sent from Patna via Bangladesh to 'Pandu' in Guwahati. For this the Brahmaputra (NW2) has been linked with the Ganges (National Waterway-1) through the 'Indo Bangladesh Protocol (IBP)' route, thus ushering in a new era for inland waterways in Assam.
- The MV Lal Bahadur Shastri ship completed the first pilot voyage from Patna to Guwahati carrying 200 metric tonnes of food grains for the Food Corporation of India (FCI).
- By this ship, the National Waterway-1 (Ganga River) will travel via Bhagalpur, Manihari, Sahibganj, Farakka, Tribeni, Kolkata, Haldia, Hemnagar. Further it covered a distance of 2,350 kms via Khulna, Narayanganj, Sirajganj, Chilmari and National Waterway No.-2 of Dhubri and Jogighopa of Indo Bangladesh Protocol (IBP).

Inland Waterways in India:

- 111 'Inland Waterways' have been declared as 'National Waterways' under the National Waterways Act, 2016 to promote inland water transport in the country.
- Inland water transport is being promoted by the Government of India as an economical, eco-friendly complementary mode of rail and road transport in the country.

Did you know that?

- Under Entry 24 of the 'Union List' under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, the Central Government has the power to make laws relating to navigation and navigation on inland waterways classified by Parliament as National Waterways.

Important National Waterways of India:

National Waterway 1:

- Allahabad to Haldia (1620 km distance).
- National Waterway 1 (NW1) passes through the Ganges, Bhagirathi and Hooghly river systems. And there are 'fixed terminals' on this route at Haldia, Farakka and Patna.
- Floating terminals are built on this waterway in river-bank cities like Kolkata, Bhagalpur, Varanasi and Allahabad.
- It is the longest national waterway in India.

National Waterway 2:

- The water course of the Brahmaputra River from 'Sadiya to Dhubri' in the state of Assam has been classified as 'National Waterway 2'.
- NW2 is the third longest waterway in the country, with a total length of 891 km.

National Waterway 3:

- The 'West Coast Canal' flowing 'from Kollam to Kottapuram' in the state of Kerala is classified as NW3.
- The 205 km long 'West Coast Canal' is India's first waterway with an all-time navigational facility.
- National Waterway 3 (NW3) consists of West Coast Canal, Champakara Canal and Udyogamandal Canal.
- This waterway passes through Kottapuram, Cherthala, Thrikunnapuzha, Kollam and Alappuzha.

National Waterway 4:

- National Waterway 4 (NW4) connects Kakinada with Pondicherry.
- It is the second longest waterway in India.
- The total length of this waterway passing through Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu is 1095 km.

National Waterway 5:

- National Waterway 5 (NW5) connects Odisha with West Bengal.
- It passes through the streams of Brahmani River, East Bank Canal, Matai River and Mahanadi River.
- This 623 km long canal system handles the traffic of cargo such as coal, fertilisers, cement and iron.

National Waterway 6:

- National Waterway 6 (NW6) is a proposed waterway in Assam.
- It will connect Lakhimpur with Bhanga through Barak River.
- Trade between Silchar (Assam) to Mizoram will get a boost through the 121 km long waterway.

UPI123Pay

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched a new UPI service called UPI123Pay for non-internet users' phones to make digital payments, as well as a 24×7 helpline for digital payments called 'DigiSathi'.
- DigiSathi has been set up by the National Payments Corporation of India to provide automated feedback to users on information related to digital payment products and services. Currently it is available in English and Hindi language.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

- It is an improved version of Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) which is a round the clock money transfer service to make cashless payments faster and easier.
- UPI is a system that powers multiple banking facilities, seamless fund routing and merchant payments to multiple bank accounts through a single mobile application (of any participating bank).
- Presently UPI is the largest among the systems operated by National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) including National Automated Clearing House (NACH), Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS), Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS), RuPay etc.
- Current top UPI apps include PhonePe, Paytm, Google Pay, Amazon Pay and BHIM App.

What is 'UPI123Pay'?

- It will work on normal phones which do not have internet connection.
- As of now the UPI feature is available only on most of the smartphones.
- UPI service for feature phones will take advantage of RBI's regulatory sandbox on retail payments.

- A regulatory sandbox usually refers to the live testing of new products or services in a controlled/tested regulatory environment for which certain regulatory exemptions may be allowed for the limited purpose of regulatory testing.
- UPI service will enable digital transactions through 'on-device' wallet mechanism in UPI applications.
- Users will be able to make multiple transactions based on four technology options, including IVR (Interactive Voice Response) numbers, missed call-based approach, app functionality in feature phones and 'Near Voice' based payments.

The profit:

- The new service for feature phones will enable individuals to pay directly to others without a smartphone and internet.
- Users can make payments to friends and family, pay utility bills, recharge their vehicle's FASTag, pay mobile bills and users can check their account balance.
- It will allow customers to use feature phones for almost all transactions except scans and payments.
- UPI123Pay will benefit an estimated 400 million feature phone users and enable them to make digital payments in a secure manner. This will help in connecting non-smartphone users to the digital payment system.

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